



January 27, 2011

DO the RIGHT Thing!

What does it really mean to “Do the Right Thing” where safety is concerned?

Recently, a young woman, a college graduate with a bright future, was sentenced to 36 years in prison. Her mother also received a sentence of eight years. All actions that ruined these two lives were a direct result of a series of conscious decisions by both to **NOT** do the right thing. Although the example below may be perceived as a bit extreme, it does emphasize this very important message. Looking back, we can all relate to some decision or action in our own lives that may not have been the right thing to do.

While at college, the young woman received four speeding tickets during a seven-month period. Each ticket was for greater than 10 miles per hour (mph) over the speed limit. Two speeding tickets were for 24 and 21 mph over the speed limit. There is no record of her license being suspended or whether she attended any remedial driver training.

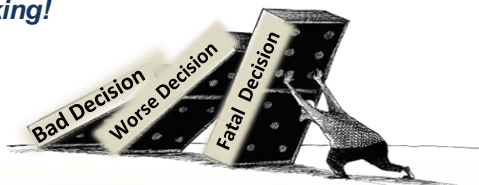
When there is no immediate consequence for unsafe behavior and we fail to do the right thing as family members, friends, co-workers, or citizens, the likelihood that the unsafe behavior will continue is significant. It is everyone’s responsibility to enforce safe work practices and it is leadership’s responsibility to take the necessary disciplinary measures to correct behavior. Remember that although not all actions have repercussions, all actions do have consequences – good or bad!

On Easter Sunday in 2009, the young woman was driving a few miles to the store to pick up some ice cream. A witness later stated that the young woman was driving very fast and weaving in and out of traffic. Now, driving safely while going to the store seems like a simple thing to do. However, unsafe behavior while performing what appears to be a low-risk task can still have very serious consequences. We see it daily, vehicles weave in and out of traffic and speed by others on the road. Reckless behavior, on and off the job, affects more than just the reckless.

The young woman’s decision to do the wrong thing, to drive recklessly, resulted in a multi-car accident killing five people including two adults, two young girls (8 and 9 years old) and a newborn baby boy. **Bad enough, but the tragedy continues.**

The young woman again makes a bad decision and flees the scene, hides the damaged car in a garage, and only tells her mother what had happened, **two days later.** The mother then perpetuates the wrongdoing; instead of notifying the police, she instructs the daughter not to say anything and has the vehicle repaired to hide the evidence. Two weeks after an intensive police search and a neighbor’s suspicion, the young woman was apprehended and jailed.

What if you know of or are involved in a close call, witness unsafe behavior, or a mishap? Would you not report it because you or someone may get in trouble? Do you sometimes disobey rules or take procedural shortcuts for convenience or to save time? Most behavior is voluntary and involves making a choice. “Doing the Right Thing” is about the internal motivation (personal and team integrity) we all need to work safely – even when no one is looking!



Old Wives’ Tale

When we were kids many of us were sent to bed with “goodnight, sleep tight, and don’t let the bed bugs bite,” but are bed bugs really still an issue today???

TRUE

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) confirmed that the U.S. is one of many countries now seeing an alarming resurgence in the population of bed bugs. Though the exact cause is not known, experts suspect the resurgence is associated with the insect’s increased resistance to pesticides, greater international and domestic travel, and lack of knowledge regarding control of bed bugs due to their prolonged absence.

Results of the joint CDC and EPA study containing recommendations for bed bug prevention can be found at:

[CDC/EPA Joint Statement on Bed Bug Control](#)

If you have questions, comments, or a topic you would like to see addressed: please send to Reneka Whicker at reneka.a.whicker@nasa.gov or Brian Gloade at brian.i.gloade@nasa.gov